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10 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**  
11 **SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

13 JEMAL ADAM,

14 Petitioner,

15 v.

16 KRISTI NOEM, Secretary of the  
17 Department of Homeland Security,  
18 PAMELA JO BONDI, Attorney General,  
19 TODD M. LYONS, Acting Director,  
20 Immigration and Customs Enforcement,  
21 JESUS ROCHA, Acting Field Office  
22 Director, San Diego Field Office,  
23 CHRISTOPHER LAROSE, Warden at  
24 Otay Mesa Detention Center,

25 Respondents.

CIVIL CASE NO.: '25CV3854 JLS BJW

**Motion for a  
Temporary Restraining Order**

23 Jemal Adam was granted withholding of removal to his native country of  
24 Sudan and his parents' native country of Ethiopia in 2012. He spent the next 13  
25 years released on an order of supervision, complying with all conditions. Yet, in  
26 December 2025, ICE detained him. ICE did not comply with regulations in  
27 redetaining him, and ICE has not been able to remove him to a third country. He  
28

1 has a strong claim to release, and every additional day in detention works  
2 irreparable harm. And ICE’s policy permits his removal to a third country with  
3 little or no notice. This Court should therefore enter a temporary restraining order  
4 (“TRO”) pending further litigation.  
5

### 6 **Argument**

7 To obtain a TRO, a plaintiff “must establish that he is likely to succeed on  
8 the merits, that he is likely to suffer irreparable harm in the absence of preliminary  
9 relief, that the balance of equities tips in his favor, and that an injunction is in the  
10 public interest.” *Winter v. Nat. Res. Def. Council, Inc.*, 555 U.S. 7, 20 (2008);  
11 *Stuhlberg Int’l Sales Co. v. John D. Brush & Co.*, 240 F.3d 832, 839-40 & n.7  
12 (9th Cir. 2001) (noting that a TRO and preliminary injunction involve  
13 “substantially identical” analysis). A “variant[] of the same standard” is the  
14 “sliding scale”: “if a plaintiff can only show that there are ‘serious questions  
15 going to the merits—a lesser showing than likelihood of success on the merits—  
16 then a preliminary injunction may still issue if the balance of hardships tips  
17 sharply in the plaintiff’s favor, and the other two *Winter* factors are satisfied.”  
18 *Immigrant Defenders Law Center v. Noem*, 145 F.4th 972, 986 (9th Cir. 2025)  
19 (internal quotation marks omitted). Under this approach, the four *Winter* elements  
20 are “balanced, so that a stronger showing of one element may offset a weaker  
21 showing of another.” *All. for the Wild Rockies v. Cottrell*, 632 F.3d 1127, 1131  
22 (9th Cir. 2011). A TRO may be granted where there are “‘serious questions going  
23 to the merits’ and a hardship balance. . . tips sharply toward the plaintiff,” and so  
24 long as the other *Winter* factors are met. *Id.* at 1132.

25 Here, this Court should issue a temporary restraining order because his  
26 unlawful immigration detention has caused, and will continue to cause,  
27 “immediate and irreparable injury . . . or damage.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(b). This  
28

1 Court should therefore order Petitioner's release and enjoin removal to a third  
2 country with no or inadequate notice.

3 **I. Petitioner is likely to succeed on the merits, or at a minimum, raises**  
4 **serious merits questions.**

5 Concurrent with this TRO motion, Mr. Adam files a habeas petition setting  
6 forth in detail why he is likely to succeed on the merits. Mr. Adam will not repeat  
7 those arguments here, but he provides some examples of recent TRO or habeas  
8 petition grants in this district related to the claims he raises in this petition.

9 (1) *Regulatory and due process violations: Constantinovici v. Bondi*, \_\_ F.  
10 Supp. 3d \_\_, 2025 WL 2898985, No. 25-cv-2405-RBM (S.D. Cal. Oct. 10, 2025);  
11 *Rokhfirooz v. Larose*, No. 25-cv-2053-RSH, 2025 WL 2646165 (S.D. Cal. Sept.  
12 15, 2025); *Phan v. Noem*, 2025 WL 2898977, No. 25-cv-2422-RBM-MSB, \*3-\*5  
13 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 10, 2025); *Sun v. Noem*, 2025 WL 2800037, No. 25-cv-2433-CAB  
14 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 30, 2025); *Van Tran v. Noem*, 2025 WL 2770623, No. 25-cv-  
15 2334-JES, \*3 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 29, 2025); *Truong v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-02597-JES,  
16 ECF No. 10 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 10, 2025); *Khambounheuang v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-  
17 02575-JO-SBC, ECF No. 12 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 9, 2025).

18 (2) *Zadvydas violations: See Conchas-Valdez*, 2025 WL 2884822, No. 25-  
19 cv-2469-DMS (S.D. Cal. Oct. 6, 2025); *Alic v. Dep't of Homeland Sec./Immigr.*  
20 *Customs Enft.*, No. 25-CV-01749-AJB-BLM, 2025 WL 2799679 (S.D. Cal. Sept.  
21 30, 2025); *Rebenok v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-2171-TWR, ECF No. 13 (S.D. Cal. Sept.  
22 25, 2025).

23 (3) *Third-country removal statutory and due process violations: This Court*  
24 *should enjoin ICE from removing Mr. Ngo to a third country without providing an*  
25 *opportunity to assert fear of persecution or torture before an immigration judge.*  
26 *See, e.g., Rebenok v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-2171-TWR at ECF No. 13; *Van Tran v.*  
27 *Noem*, 2025 WL 2770623 at \*3; *Nguyen Tran v. Noem*, No. 25-cv-2391-BTM, ECF  
28 No. 6 (S.D. Cal. Sept. 18, 2025); *Louangmilith v. Noem*, 2025 WL 2881578, No.

1 25-cv-2502-JES, \*4 (S.D. Cal. Oct. 9, 2025).

2 **II. Petitioner will suffer irreparable harm absent injunctive relief.**

3  
4 Petitioner also meets the second factor, irreparable harm. “It is well  
5 established that the deprivation of constitutional rights ‘unquestionably constitutes  
6 irreparable injury.’” *Melendres v. Arpaio*, 695 F.3d 990, 1002 (9th Cir. 2012)  
7 (quoting *Elrod v. Burns*, 427 U.S. 347, 373 (1976)). Where the “alleged deprivation  
8 of a constitutional right is involved, most courts hold that no further showing of  
9 irreparable injury is necessary.” *Warsoldier v. Woodford*, 418 F.3d 989, 1001-02  
10 (9th Cir. 2005) (quoting 11A Charles Alan Wright et al., *Federal Practice and  
11 Procedure*, § 2948.1 (2d ed. 2004)).

12 Here, the potential irreparable harm to Petitioner is even more concrete. The  
13 Ninth Circuit has specifically recognized the “irreparable harms imposed on anyone  
14 subject to immigration detention.” *Hernandez v. Sessions*, 872 F.3d 976, 995 (9th  
15 Cir. 2017). That is because “[u]nlawful detention constitutes ‘extreme or very  
16 serious damage, and that damage is not compensable in damages.’” *Hernandez v.  
17 Sessions*, 872 F.3d 976, 999 (9th Cir. 2017).

18 Finally, “[i]t is beyond dispute that Petitioner would face irreparable harm  
19 from removal to a third country.” *Nguyen*, 2025 WL 2419288, at \*26. Recent third-  
20 country deportees have been held, indefinitely and without charge, in hazardous  
21 foreign prisons. *See Wong et al., supra*. They have been subjected to solitary  
22 confinement. *See Imray, supra*. They have been removed to countries so unstable  
23 that the U.S. government recommends making a will and appointing a hostage  
24 negotiator before traveling to them. *See Wong, supra*. These and other threats to  
25 Petitioner’s health and life independently constitute irreparable harm.

1 **III. The balance of hardships and the public interest weigh heavily in**  
2 **petitioner’s favor.**

3 The final two factors for a TRO—the balance of hardships and public  
4 interest—“merge when the Government is the opposing party.” *Nken v. Holder*,  
5 556 U.S. 418, 435 (2009). That balance tips decidedly in Petitioner’s favor. On the  
6 one hand, the government “cannot reasonably assert that it is harmed in any legally  
7 cognizable sense” by being compelled to follow the law. *Zepeda v. I.N.S.*, 753 F.2d  
8 719, 727 (9th Cir. 1983). Moreover, it is always in the public interest to prevent  
9 violations of the U.S. Constitution and ensure the rule of law. *See Nken*, 556 U.S.  
10 at 436 (describing public interest in preventing noncitizens “from being wrongfully  
11 removed, particularly to countries where they are likely to face substantial harm”);  
12 *Moreno Galvez v. Cuccinelli*, 387 F. Supp. 3d 1208, 1218 (W.D. Wash. 2019)  
13 (when government’s treatment “is inconsistent with federal law, . . . the balance of  
14 hardships and public interest factors weigh in favor of a preliminary injunction.”).  
15 On the other hand, Petitioner faces weighty hardships: unlawful, indefinite  
16 detention and removal to a third country where he is likely to suffer imprisonment  
17 or other serious harm. The balance of equities thus favors preventing the violation  
18 of “requirements of federal law,” *Arizona Dream Act Coal. v. Brewer*, 757 F.3d  
19 1053, 1069 (9th Cir. 2014), by granting emergency relief to protect against unlawful  
20 detention and prevent unlawful third country removal.

21  
22 Respectfully submitted,

23  
24 Dated: December 31, 2025

*s/ Katie Hurrelbrink*

25 **KATIE HURRELBRINK**

26 Federal Defenders of San Diego, Inc.

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**PROOF OF SERVICE**

I, the undersigned, will cause the attached Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus to be emailed to the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of California at USACAS.Habeas2241@usdoj.gov when I receive the court-stamped copy.

Date: 12/24/2025

/s/ Katie Hurrelbrink  
Katie Hurrelbrink